

Kentucky Teacher™

AUGUST 2002

Field study of Web-based core content tests goes statewide this fall

By Fran Salyers
Kentucky Department of Education

Kentucky schools can 'test the accessibility of the test' and give certain students with disabilities exposure to Web-based assessment.

Students with disabilities who rely on certain computer technology for access to printed materials can opt this fall to be part of an expanded field study of a Web-based, electronic version of the Kentucky Core Content Tests.

The expanded study will be the third of three steps in evaluating the feasibility of making the tests accessible in electronic format for eligible students. Eligible students are those who use text-to-speech technology because they have disabilities (identified in Kentucky law and regulations) that make it impossible or im-

practical for them to read traditional printed materials, including the printed state tests.

This fall, the Kentucky Department of Education will post on the Internet a complete, accessible set of sample core content tests in all content areas tested in grades 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12. Students who qualify for and use these kinds of accommodations in the normal delivery of instruction can take the test by going online using a computer that is equipped with text reader or screen reader software that reads test questions aloud and accepts responses en-

tered via a mouse or keyboard.

The state's focus will be on process, not scores. The goals are to see how eligible students respond to taking the complete tests on computers and to "test drive" a prototype electronic version of the tests. This will also give eligible students exposure to taking an assessment online so they will have more familiarity with this mode of assessment. Eligible students are those who have Individual Education Programs or 504 Plans that include the routine use of text-to-speech assistive technology for access to printed materials.

In March, the state completed a technical review of prototype tests developed specifically for Kentucky by eCollege, a company that specializes in computer-based learning. The results of this first step toward computer-based assessments led to the second step: a limited field study of the Web-based testing process. In May, following practice sessions with sample questions, 61 students in 21 schools took short sections of the prototype tests. The students took 30-60 minutes to respond to the questions.

The results of the field study were generally positive, reports Preston

Lewis of the department's Division of Exceptional Children Services. "The feedback from teachers and students indicated that we're on the right track," Lewis said. "Now we're taking step three, a statewide field study."

Scott Trimble, who heads the department's Office of Assessment and Accountability, said the limited field study yielded some evidence that middle school and high school students were more successful in using the technology than were elementary students.

To give all students opportunities to become familiar with the technology, students who participate in the expanded field study will have access to practice tests for several weeks before the actual field study.

Trimble said the results of the expanded study would determine how soon eligible students will have electronic access to Kentucky's core content tests. He said the state is aiming for spring 2003 but cautions that some issues are still unresolved.

"We still face some technical challenges and test security concerns," he said. "We want to do what is right for kids by giving them equal access to the testing process and more con-

Continued on Page 4



Photo by Rick McComb

Beechwood Elementary students Tina Tomlinson and Clayton Willman use text reader software to write short stories. Kentucky students with disabilities who routinely rely on computer technology for access to printed materials can opt this fall to be part of an expanded field study of a Web-based, electronic version of the Kentucky Core Content Tests.

At a Glance

- The Department of Education invites schools to volunteer for a statewide field study of a process that will give some disabled students access to an electronic version of the Kentucky Core Content Tests.
- The field test will take place this fall.
- Participating schools will have access to sample tests before the field study.
- The department will send details to superintendents, principals and district assessment coordinators beginning in August.
- For details, contact Scott Trimble at (502) 564-2256 or Preston Lewis at (502) 564-4970. Both names are on the KETS global e-mail list.



By Gene Wilhoit
Commissioner of Education

Ready to Roll!

Department trains teams to deliver strategic, targeted support to schools

Kentucky is gearing up for a new school year, and the Department of Education is gearing up for a whole new way of serving districts and schools.

For all of us at the department, this summer has been a time of rethinking, retooling and retraining: rethinking our role in helping you get your schools to proficiency, retooling to be more responsive to local needs and retraining ourselves to provide a higher level of support to schools and educators.

Many of you have told me that our people and services have been helpful in the past, but we will soon be ready to help in an expanded way. The department's staff will be available for on-site assistance targeted to what schools and districts need to reach proficiency by 2014. The core content test results and other data released this September will identify schools that need extra help. We will engage the districts in developing cooperative plans with those schools and then create service teams with the specific expertise schools need to succeed with their plans.

The work of these service teams will coincide with our accountability

cycles, beginning with the release of state core content test results in even-numbered years and continuing through an accountability cycle and around the existing consolidated plans. Our work will correspond with the work schedule that exists in schools.

Here are a few specifics of this still-evolving plan:

- We will use test scores and other Commonwealth Accountability Testing System data to identify the schools that need extra support: schools below the assistance line on their growth charts; schools with achievement gaps; "progressing" schools that are not getting the traction they need to advance into rewards and toward proficiency.

- With each of those schools, we will conduct a scholastic audit or review, then provide follow-up support based on audit/review findings. Highly skilled educators, regional service center staffs and local districts will provide assistance to these schools as in the past. The department's service teams will work along with them, providing support and follow-up in implementing improvement plans the schools develop.

- We will provide or arrange for job-embedded professional development to build local capacity.

- We will designate one department contact for each of these schools, giving the school "one-stop shopping" for department information and services.

- We will involve universities, education cooperatives and other partners to get assistance to more schools more quickly and, in the process, unify an already strong statewide education community.

- We will make service team assignments based on each school's needs, and we will coordinate team visits to minimize disruption of the school schedule.

To prepare for this level of direct service, virtually all of us at the department have received training in the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement. Those of us who will serve on audit and review teams will receive more training in September. Those who will be members of service teams will receive extensive training based on what we have learned from highly skilled educators, regional service center staff, our own cross-agency teams and vari-

ous advisory groups of superintendents, principals, teachers and others.

The focus of all of this activity is the success of every district, every school and every student. We will use all available resources to ensure that the Department of Education is a relevant, effective and useful resource for schools and districts striving to reach the goal.

A number of local education leaders have told me that they like our plan, which is encouraging to all of us at the department. I am developing a system to solicit feedback from educators statewide. Please watch your e-mail or the department's Web site for a "quick response" survey, and please reply.

In the meantime, the department continues to rethink, retool and retrain so we will be "ready to roll" when you need us.

To comment now on this topic, send e-mail to gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us or phone the commissioner's office at (502) 564-3141.

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State proceeds toward compliance with federal 'No Child Left Behind Act'

Kentucky education officials are proceeding with the state's efforts to comply with the new federal "No Child Left Behind Act" of 2001. The act reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and continues federal funding to public schools, districts and states for educating disadvantaged students. These federal funds constitute about 7 percent of the revenue for local school districts in Kentucky.

Much of the intent of the assessment and accountability requirements in the federal law is consistent with what Kentucky already is doing, Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit told members of the Kentucky Board of Education at their meeting in June. Wilhoit pointed out that the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) already has these components required by the new federal law:

- high student performance standards aligned to an annual, rig-

orous state assessment;

- a goal of student proficiency for all students within 12 years (2014);
- an accountability system or "adequate yearly progress";
- rewards for high-performing schools and consequences for schools not meeting their goals;
- school improvement plans;
- highly skilled educators to assist low-performing schools;
- scholastic audit teams;
- school and district report cards.

The federal law has some assessment and accountability requirements that must be reconciled with Kentucky's system. John Poggio, chair of the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability, and James Catterall, vice chair, advised the board to let federal officials better define the law's requirements before proposing changes to any part of CATS.



Dorie Combs



Jeffrey C. Mando



Hilma S. Prather



David Tachau

Meet the new state board

Gov. Paul S. Patton has appointed four new members to four-year terms on the Kentucky Board of Education:

- Dorie Combs, associate professor, Eastern Kentucky University, College of Education, Richmond. Former middle school language arts teacher.
- Jeffrey C. Mando, attorney, Villa Hills (northern Kentucky). Previous service on the Kentucky Board of Education from 1992 to 2000.
- Hilma Skonberg Prather, retired elementary school teacher and principal, Somerset. Former member, Council on Postsecondary Education.
- David Tachau, attorney, Louisville. Former board member, Louisville Diversified Services (vocational and employment opportunities for adults with mental disabilities).

Patton reappointed three members: Helen Mountjoy of Utica, Keith Travis of Benton and Bill Weinberg of Hindman.

Continuing to serve unexpired terms are Alcie Combs of Pikeville, Gail Henson of Louisville, Sam Robinson of Louisville and Paul Whalen of Fort Thomas. The president of the Council on Postsecondary Education serves as an ex-officio member of the board. The president's post is now vacant. Sue Hodges Moore is serving as interim president while the council works to fill the vacancy.

Additional information about the Kentucky Board of Education and its members is available online at www.kentuckyschools.org.

Board proposes changes in LEP student testing and teacher tribunals

At its June meeting in Frankfort, the Kentucky Board of Education approved emergency implementation of an amended law that outlines the procedures for the inclusion of special student populations in the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System.

Kentucky's assessment system already meets federal requirements for all students except those with limited English proficiency (LEP). Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, schools will administer a state-approved English language proficiency assessment to LEP students entering Kentucky public schools. The assessment will mea-

sure each student's English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

The new regulation requires schools to include LEP students in state-required assessments and requires school personnel to determine what accommodations or modifications the students will use on the state tests.

The emergency regulation holds schools accountable for an LEP student's progress after that student has been in a school for a full academic year prior to the year of the assessment in question.

In other business, the state board approved its intent to amend a state regulation that establishes

procedures for teacher disciplinary hearings. The amendment would bring the regulation into compliance with Senate Bill 211, enacted by the 2002 General Assembly.

The proposed amendment permits retired teachers and school administrators to serve in the teacher and administrator positions on teacher tribunals. The commissioner of education convenes a tribunal (one teacher, one administrator and one member of the general public) to conduct an administrative hearing when a teacher appeals a local school board's disciplinary action that results in public reprimand, suspension without pay or termination of employment.

The amendment also requires training for the pool of potential tribunal members.

The board also accepted a draft report from the American Institutes for Research on a study of services and facilities at the Kentucky School for the Blind and the Kentucky School for the Deaf; approved preschool funding for 2002-03; approved the Kentucky Education Technology System's 2002-03 unmet need funding for districts; and discussed a proposed Comprehensive Plan for Coordinated School Health.

The board scheduled its next meeting for Aug. 7 and 8 in Frankfort.

Report from the Limited Field Study of Web-based Core Content Testing May 2002

What Students Said
(Based on responses from 47 participants in grades 4, 8 and 11)

As with the printed test, some students needed human helpers to take the electronic test. However, more could take the electronic test on their own. According to their teachers, students had these reactions:

- 83% liked using the computer for testing.
- 68% said they would like to use the computer to take next spring's core content tests; another 23% said "maybe."
- 70% said they could understand the test questions and that the computer helped with meaning.
- 78% said they preferred having test questions read to them by a computer rather than a human.
- 66% thought they performed better on tests using a computer than with human help.

What Teachers Said
(Based on responses from 20 participating teachers)

- 65% thought most of the students liked taking the tests on computers.
- 75% thought it helped the students' understanding of test questions.
- 89% said they preferred or "sort of" preferred administering the test using a computer to a human reader.
- 74% said they had "no problems" with the electronic assessment.
- 58% said the design of the online assessment worked well.
- 63% thought their school/district Internet networks were reliable for Web-based test administration.

Core Content Tests Continued from Page 1

trol over their responses, but security will be a major factor. For the sake of all students, we can't compromise the integrity of the tests."

Of equal or maybe greater importance, Trimble said, is the need for this mode of assessment to be consistent with the normal delivery of instructional materials and services. "While screen reader or text reader technology is certainly more available today, there is not yet a great deal of evidence that it is being routinely used to provide access to printed instructional materials," he said. "Consistent use of this technology for instruction is critical to a sound use of this technology in the assessment environment."

For more information, contact Preston Lewis at (502) 564-4970 or plewis@kde.state.ky.us; Linnie Calland at (502) 564-7168 or lcalland@kde.state.ky.us; or Scott Trimble at (502) 564-2256 or sttrimble@kde.state.ky.us.

For more about text reader software, including information on 45 percent discounts on text reader purchases before Sept. 30, see Page 8 of the March 2002 issue of *Kentucky Teacher* (www.kentuckyschools.org/kentuckyteacher), or contact Preston Lewis or Linnie Calland.

SAT revisions coming in March 2005

On June 27, College Board trustees voted to make these changes in the SAT test, effective March 2005.

- The former SAT Verbal Exam will become the SAT Critical Reading Exam. This test will eliminate analogy questions and add short prose sections to measure reading ability.
- A new section called the SAT Writing Exam will contain multiple-choice grammar questions as well as a written essay.
- An expanded SAT Math Exam will cover three years of high school math, including Algebra II.

For more information, visit www.collegeboard.com on the Internet. Click on "The New SAT."

'Millet to Matisse' to open Nov. 6 at Speed Museum



Pablo Picasso, *The Flower Seller*, 1901, Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland; ©Picasso Administration, DACS

A U.S. premiere of Impressionist art will open Nov. 6 at The Speed Museum in Louisville. "Millet to Matisse: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century French Painting from Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland" will include works from the Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and Modern periods. The exhibit, scheduled at the Speed through Feb. 2, 2003, includes works by Monet, Renoir, Cassatt, Cézanne, van Gogh, Picasso and others.

Teachers and students can study the paintings and painters online using a digital brochure posted at www.speedmuseum.org/brochure. This resource presents a different work of art each month plus a timeline of world events that coincided with the Impressionist period. Free exhibit-related lesson plans are available at www.speedmuseum.org/m2m_lesson_plans.html.

The Speed has scheduled "Millet to Matisse" events for educators:

- Reception – Nov. 12 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.; "open house" with music, refreshments, self-guided tour. Educational materials available. Reservations required; call (502) 634-2700.

- Professional development session – Nov. 19 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Designed for teachers who will be bringing school groups to the exhibition or teaching about the featured artists in their classrooms. Tour of the exhibition plus refreshments. Reservations required; call (502) 634-2734 by Nov. 15.

Both events are free of charge except for a \$3 fee for parking in the Speed's garage.

For more information about instructional resources, contact Martin Rollins at (502) 634-2715 or mrollins@speedmuseum.org.

To arrange for a group tour of the "Millet to Matisse" exhibition (Nov. 6, 2002, through Feb. 2, 2003), send e-mail to tours@speedmuseum.org or call (502) 634-2960.

Share what works! Apply now to present at KTLc 2003

Are you an educator with a proven strategy for helping Kentucky's students and schools get to proficiency? If so, planners of the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference invite your proposal to present your successful strategy at the next conference.

KTLc, the state's major professional development opportunity for public school educators, will be March 6-8, 2003, at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville. The deadline for presentation proposals is Sept. 16, 2002.

Conference coordinator Kay Anne Wilborn of the Department of Education's Office of Communications seeks presenters with expertise in a broad range of topics and skills.

"The event has grown from a conference on how to install and use technology to a major professional development opportunity for all educators and education advocates," Wilborn said. "The theme 'Pathways to Proficiency' reflects the focus. Any concept that connects with Kentucky's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement – any concept that has had measurable success in supporting higher levels of student achievement – can be an important part of this conference."

Conference planners are building an agenda that includes sessions on all aspects of teaching, learning and school management. A partial list of topics includes curriculum and instruction issues, school safety, parent and community involvement, af-

ter-school programs, creative instructional uses of intersessions, equity and diversity issues, systemic professional development programs, analyzing student work, dropout reduction strategies, preparing students for the world of work, and meeting Kentucky's teacher and student standards.

The conference staff will score each presentation proposal using these criteria:

- completeness and accuracy;
- relevance to student learning;
- clarity of description;
- connections to content standards;
- qualifications and expertise of presenters;
- relevance to conference theme;
- connections to Kentucky's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement;
- inclusion of Kentucky's Teacher Professional Development Standards.

See the standards online at www.kentuckyschools.org/comm/ktlc2003.asp. For more information about the conference, watch for an updated Web site (www.kentuckytlc.org) coming in early fall, or contact the conference planners by e-mail at ktlc@kde.state.ky.us.

At a Glance

- Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference: March 6-8, 2003
- Deadline for proposals to present: Sept. 16, 2002. No proposals will be accepted after that date. Application available online at www.kentuckyschools.org/comm/ktlc2003.asp. Questions? Contact Cheryl Sanders at (502) 564-3421, (800) 533-5372 or csanders@kde.state.ky.us.
- Registration: Watch the Web site and *Kentucky Teacher* for information. Recommendation: Register before the deadline and avoid potentially long lines for on-site registration.
- Hotel information and reservations: www.pkghlrs.com/events/7333/7333.html. Recommendation: Reserve early. Hotels fill up quickly for this event.

Four schools win national honors

One "New American," three "Blue Ribbon"

The U.S. Department of Education has included four Kentucky schools as winners in two programs recognizing excellence during the 2001-02 school year.

The department named Daviess County High one of the nation's six New American High Schools for the year. In a congratulatory letter to Principal Brad Stanley, a department official cited the school's efforts "to set high standards of academic excellence for all students, close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and advantaged students, use research-based practices as the foundation for school improvement efforts, and offer students and parents a range of educational options."

To compete for this national recognition, schools must supply compelling evidence of standards-based, locally driven reform efforts that have had positive effects on key indicators of school improvement and student success.

Daviess County High and the other winning schools will receive the federal agency's technical assistance to build on the successes they have already achieved. For more about this program, visit www.ed.gov/pubs/promisinginitiatives/nahs.html.

The U.S. Department of Education's list of National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2001-02 includes three Kentucky schools:

- North Oldham Middle
- Oldham County High
- Villa Madonna Academy (Covington Diocese)

The three schools were among 169 public and private secondary schools throughout the nation to be honored for excellence in leadership, teaching, curriculum, student achievement and parental involvement.

Information from the U.S. Department of Education stated that the winning schools shared several characteristics: a clear vision and shared sense of mission; a challenging, up-to-date curriculum; policies and practices that ensure a safe campus; evidence of family involvement; and a commitment to help all students achieve high standards.

Blue Ribbon Schools are selected based on written materials, reports and site visits. Nominations come from state education agencies, the Department of Defense and the Council for American Private Education. The program spotlights elementary and secondary schools in alternate years. For details, visit the Web at www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/BlueRibbonSchools/.

Students learn while caring for the environment

By Joy Barr

Kentucky Department of Education

How much weight can a beetle pull? This is an example of the science challenges that keep 4th-graders at Rosenwald-Dunbar Elementary actively involved in science. Students weigh their beetles. Gradually they add small weights to determine how much each beetle can pull. Then come writing and mathematics exercises that build on the activity.

Scientific exploration is routine in Vonnie Pridemore's classroom. She brings innovative and creative instruction into her classroom to raise student achievement at the Jessamine County elementary school. Pridemore likes to use hands-on learning activities. "I want my students to become real-world learners and problem solvers," she recently told a visitor to the school.

At the beginning of each school year, Pridemore shares with her class the core content and standards – what they need to learn that year. Pridemore has a special interest in science, and she offers the students an opportunity to design a student-based inquiry project. She and her students discuss and select a current environmental issue that is important to the students. They focus many of their classroom activities on that environmental issue. Much of the work is hands-on learning that involves problem solving and critical thinking.

Pridemore's students have chosen to do projects on endangered species and habitat destruction, water and water quality, and preservation of trees.

The classroom is busy and interactive. More than 20 creatures – birds, turtles, fish, a hedgehog, and hamsters – live there. Each year the class maintains a bird sanctuary and fishpond on school grounds, right outside the classroom window.



Teacher Vonnie Pridemore shows Rosenwald-Dunbar Elementary student Hannah Walker how mixing two liquids can make a solid. The Jessamine County teacher, a recent winner of the National Science Foundation's Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science Teaching, encourages hands-on scientific exploration in her classroom.

Photo by Rick McComb

Students seem to thrive on Pridemore's project-based approach to teaching. They say the projects make learning fun and make science concepts easy to remember.

Recent projects have included work with a motorized Ferris wheel, a motorized car and a solar-powered car. "Activities like these help students come to school excited and ready to learn something new," Pridemore said. "This is what makes teaching worthwhile."

An educator for more than 18 years, Pridemore said she continually seeks new ways to keep students engaged in academic work that results in high levels of understanding and achievement.

"Teaching is very rewarding for me. My students are learning science concepts in ways that are meaning-

ful and fun for them," she said. "I am able to reach every student in my classes regardless of ability level, and everyone is able to work in an area of the environmental project that interests them. I am teaching and learning every day I am in the classroom. My students are proud of themselves and the work they are doing."

Pridemore said she considers assessment an essential part of the learning process that must be continuous, not just a test at the end of a unit. "This is especially true with the student inquiry environmental projects," she said. "The projects last over a long period of time. Checking the students' progress throughout the project enables me to adjust instruction and meet the needs of individual students."

Pridemore is one of four Kentucky teachers chosen by the National Science Foundation to receive Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching for 2001. This is the nation's highest recognition for teaching in these content areas. Watch future issues of *Kentucky Teacher* for features about the other Presidential Award winners.

For information about the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, call Ann Bartosh, state mathematics consultant, or Russell Moore, state science consultant, at (502) 564-2106, or send e-mail to them through the KETS global list.

For more information about Vonnie Pridemore's environmental projects, contact her by phone at Rosenwald-Dunbar Elementary at (859) 885-6670 or by e-mail at vpridemore@jessamine.k12.ky.us.

Teacher Profile

Vonnie Pridemore

School: Rosenwald-Dunbar Elementary (Jessamine County)
Grade : 4

Years teaching: 18

Degrees: Bachelor's, University of Kentucky; Master's, Georgetown College

Recognition: Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, Jessamine County Educational Grant recipient, PRIDE Foundation Grant recipient

Technology brings schools into 21st-century learning

KETS
Status Report

By **Faun S. Fishback**

Kentucky Department of Education

Ten years ago, chalk, a good eraser, a blackboard and textbooks were a teacher's main instructional tools.

Today, Kentucky teachers have computer workstations at or near their desks. They use computers to record attendance and grades, communicate with other faculty members and parents by e-mail, and do research on the Internet.

The classroom contains other computers, also linked to the Internet. Students use these computers for assignments, research and e-mail.

A telephone is within easy reach of the teacher's desk, putting parents – as well as administrators and teachers in other parts of the building – just a phone call away.

Officials with the Kentucky Department of Education expect classrooms in all public schools to be similarly equipped and in compliance with the Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) standards by Dec. 31. Those standards, established in 1992, require schools to have a core set of technology tools that will enhance students' educational experiences and assist teachers and administrators with decision making.

David Couch, associate commissioner of the department's Office of Education Technology, told the Kentucky Board of Education in June that 99 percent of the state's schools meet the KETS standards in these areas of Phase I implementation:

- Buildings have high-speed access to the Internet and local networks for teacher and student computer workstations.
- Schools have at least one computer for every five students (exceeding the state goal of one to six.)
- Teacher workstations are installed in classrooms.
- Teachers and staff have e-mail accounts.

Over the past 10 years, approximately \$620 million has been spent



Photo by Rick McComb

Bringing Experts to the Classroom

Breckinridge County teachers and students use state-of-the-art technology for teaching, learning and connecting with the world. Last spring, students at the district's middle school brought mechanical engineer Todd Self into their classroom by way of a video conference. Students could see and hear Self as he responded to their questions from his office at a local manufacturing company. For more about technology in Breckinridge County schools, see Pages 8 and 9.

or allocated to help districts fully implement Phase I of KETS. Because the state's 176 districts must provide a 50 percent match, they have taken different approaches to spending the money and setting up equipment in the 1,400 schools to comply with the standards.

This summer many districts are working to complete student e-mail accounts, install phones in classrooms, and provide remote access service for teachers and staff. Districts have been slower to implement these KETS requirements, Couch told the board, because of concerns with abuse.

"We cannot stop a determined person from doing wrong," Couch said. "However, we can make it very difficult for people to abuse the systems." Software and screening de-

vices can help schools and districts monitor use and abuse of e-mail, the Internet and telephones, he said.

Underscoring the importance of student e-mail accounts, he told the board that professors at most state postsecondary institutions ask students to submit assignments via e-mail. They also use e-mail to communicate with students away from the classroom.

"Using e-mail is not a skill set we give students in their senior year," Couch said. "Students need to be using it throughout their school careers to pre-

pare them for college and the work force."

Couch also expressed concern that 20 percent of the teachers in classrooms with telephones do not have the ability to call outside the school without going through an office or district switchboard. (See story on page 10.)

"What other profession requires employees to have bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees but does not give employees the freedom to use the telephone?" Couch asked. "Calls can be tracked and screened to curb abuse. The benefits to increased parent/teacher communication outweigh the risk of abuse."

After the completion of KETS Phase I, schools and districts will focus on maintaining and enhancing their technology systems. Educators will further integrate technology into instruction and help students develop their technology skills across the curriculum, Couch said. See pages 8 and 9 to find out how Breckinridge County schools are making Phase II happen.

For details about the Kentucky Education Technology System, visit the Web at www.kentuckyschools.org/oet, contact the school district's technology coordinator, or contact Associate Commissioner David Couch at (502) 564-2020 (extension 229) or dcouch@kde.state.ky.us.

"What other profession requires employees to have bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees but does not give employees the freedom to use the telephone?"

David Couch, associate commissioner,
Office of Education Technology

Wired for Success in Bre

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

Technology empowers teachers and learners

Breckinridge County is much farther than a stone's throw away from big cities, industrial centers and corporate home offices. Maybe that's why technology is flourishing in the county's schools. Breckinridge County teachers and students use state-of-the-art technology for teaching, learning and connecting with the world.

The county school board, Superintendent Wayne Puckett and leadership in the district schools have leveraged state and local funding, E-rate funds and grants to make certain that teachers and students are "wired" for success as they journey to proficiency and beyond.

"With technology and good instruction, we're targeting the specific learning needs of our students," said Breckinridge County Middle School Principal Dan Snodgrass. Snodgrass began planning in partnership with the school board four years ago to bring state-of-the-art technology into his school. (See story on facing page.)

Throughout the district, the ratio of students to computers is three to one. (The state's goal is six to one.) About 95 percent of the district's computers are networked to give students and faculty access to the Internet.

Students in an entire 5th-grade classroom at Ben Johnson Elementary use wireless laptops for learning. The district also provides assistive/adaptive devices such as oversized monitors with 21-inch screens and text readers for students with disabilities, said Chris Jarboe, the district's technology coordinator.

Teachers and classified staff members use e-mail to communicate within school buildings and across the district. Teachers share information and digital photos of classroom activities with parents via e-mail.

Jarboe anticipates that all students will have their own school e-mail accounts as this new school year begins.

Many classrooms have Smart Boards and computer-linked projection equipment. The large-screen format allows all students in a class to see electronic presentations, Internet pages and video teleconferencing at the same time.

Teachers see technology in the classroom as a way to instruct students working at different levels of learning and to bring content-rich information into the classroom via the Internet. Students use technology for research, to build skills and to demonstrate understanding of what they've learned, Snodgrass said.

Students in Breckinridge County also can learn computer maintenance and programming. Members of the Student Technology Leadership Program help maintain student network accounts at their schools. Additionally, the district employs seven computer technicians who troubleshoot problems in the schools and maintain the networks and equipment for the district.

"Technology is extending learning for our 21st-century students," said Snodgrass, the middle school principal. "If we (at Breckinridge County Middle School) took away the technology, we'd have a revolt!"

For more information about technology in Breckinridge County schools, contact Chris Jarboe, district technology coordinator, at jarboec@breck.k12.ky.us or (270) 756-2186.



Photo by Rick McComb

Student Kelsy Alexander and teacher Jennifer Drane confer about a writing assignment at Breckinridge County Middle School. Each of the school's students has an individual account for storing and retrieving assignments on one of the school's servers.



Kasie Poole uses one of the many laptops available for entire classes or individual students doing specific assignments at Breckinridge County Middle School. Wireless access to the Internet is available throughout the building.

Superintendent Wayne Puckett and leadership in the district schools have leveraged state and local funding, E-rate funds and grants to make certain that teachers and students are "wired" for success as they journey to proficiency and beyond.

Technology motivates middle-schoolers

Except for his trademark white lab coat, Breckinridge County Middle School 8th-grade teacher Stan Martin might easily be mistaken for a celebrity musician. This "science guy" has all the electronic trappings of Garth Brooks during a concert. He wears a headset microphone while teaching and often uses amplified background music during class.

This former district technology coordinator uses a variety of technology to deliver instruction, from a camera that attaches to a microscope to video teleconferencing. Last spring, students talked via video teleconference from their seats in the school science lab to an engineer for a local aluminum company in another part of the county and a Florida-based NASA official who is involved in the MARS space project.

"He's making real-life connections for his students, to show them why we need to study mathematics and science," Principal Dan Snodgrass said about Martin.

Technology empowers education for the 5th- through 8th-graders who attend this Kentucky school. "Technology won't replace good teachers," Snodgrass emphasized. "However, with technology, good teachers have a new tool to provide instruction to their students."

Fifth-grade teacher Becky Hook says teachers are using technology to "instruct in a medium that students enjoy." Students get excited about doing research and making classroom presentations because they can use technology to do the work, she said.

Near the end of last school year, two girls completed a class presentation on conductors of electricity. "They wrote information on the board. They had worksheets and hands-on activities for the other students. They used information from the Internet and took the class through a soft-

ware tutorial program (on the projection screen)," Hooks explained. "They addressed every learning style! It's amazing that students came up with all that. But as we let students do more, we find they have wonderful ideas they can share about learning."

Throughout the building, teachers and students are using what Principal Snodgrass regards as "cutting-edge technology." Middle school students in the pre-vocational lab are flying model airplanes, wiring electronic circuits and performing stress tests on

assignments.

Each Breckinridge County Middle student has an account on one of the school's servers to store work and retrieve assignments. Snodgrass expects individual student e-mail accounts to be "up" this fall.

At the end of another hallway, students are using one of the school day's eight class periods to shore up content knowledge in the skills lab. An instructional aide monitors students as they work at their own level to increase their mathematics, reading, science and writing skills.

Snodgrass credits technology with empowering students to do more and be more. "Students who were not interested in school are finding a connection to education through technology," he said. "It has motivated the students who had horrendous attendance records. Now they aren't missing school because of the technology they get to use."

Snodgrass has taken a leadership role in getting equipment for the school and making teachers comfortable using e-mail, the Internet, Smart Boards and digital cameras for instruction. Six years ago, after he conducted e-mail training, the principal asked teachers to communicate with him only through e-mail.

"I've required involvement," Snodgrass said. "Teachers are using technology more. They are finding Web sites to incorporate into their class work. Our staff is proficient in using technology."

Eighth-grader Madelyn Owen is project leader for the school's Web site and takes computer programming as her exploratory class. She estimates she uses a school computer once

or twice a day.

"All the technology makes us want to learn more," she said. "There are programs to help us learn and it (having computer skills) really will help us in the future finding jobs."

For more information on how Breckinridge County Middle School teachers and students use technology for teaching and learning, contact Principal Dan Snodgrass at snodgrad@breck.k12.ky.us or (270) 756-3060.



Wesley Maze (front left) and Daniel Vessels use laptops to work independently on a science experiment at Breckinridge County Middle School. District leaders say they leveraged state and local funding, federal E-rate funds and grants to "wire" teachers and students for success in school and beyond.

Photo by Rick McComb

Popsicle-stick bridges they've built. They are using computer programs to learn how simple machines operate, to explore careers and to test the skills they acquire.

In another classroom, every student is working at a laptop computer. Students have wireless access from anywhere in the building through a schoolwide network to instructional materials and the Internet. Several carts of laptop computers are available for whole classes or individual students to use during specific

Photo by Rick McComb

Phones are 'tools of the trade' for Dawson Springs teachers

KETS
Status Report

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

Making a phone call to a parent or guardian used to be an involved process for teachers in Dawson Springs, an independent district in western Kentucky's Hopkins County. First, they would gather grade books and the other materials they needed from their classrooms. Then they began the search for a phone located in a relatively quiet place and not in use.

Even though Dawson Springs is a small school district — about 52 teachers, a little more than 700 students and three schools on the same campus — chances were pretty good that the phone in the office or the teachers' lounge would be busy. Then there was always a chance that teachers wouldn't reach the person they were calling, at least on the first try. Many teachers resorted to taking information home and calling parents at night.

District officials changed all that about three years ago as part of the district's compliance with the Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) standards. Dawson Springs teachers have telephones in their

classrooms. Communicating with parents and guardians now is as easy as dialing the phone and opening a grade book or accessing information from their computer.

"The telephone is just another tool for teachers to do their work," said Kent Dillingham, district technology coordinator, "just like a pencil sharpener or the school car we have for our teachers to use. These are all things we provide our teachers with the understanding that they are used strictly for school business."

Renee Miller, 7th- and 8th-grade English teacher, and primary teacher Lee Hall have been teaching in the Dawson Springs system long enough to remember the years without phones in classrooms. "You don't know what you've missed until you have a phone in your classroom," Hall said. "When I need to talk with a parent about a problem, I can just pick up the phone and deal with it right then. I feel very fortunate to have the phone in my classroom."

For Miller, safety is also an issue. "You know that you can get help immediately in an emergency situa-

tion," she explained. The classroom phones automatically ring the principal's office when teachers need assistance.

The district's phone system also serves as an intercom for the elementary, middle and high school classrooms. Instead of announcements being made in the individual buildings, "announcements come to everyone at the same time," Miller said. "Everyone hears the same information."

The telephone system also has increased communication with parents, the teachers said. The district newsletter annually publishes teachers' voice mail extension numbers. Parents can leave messages for the teachers in their voice mailboxes or ask to be called. Teachers also can leave information about assignments and class activities for students and parents in their voice mailboxes.

"At first, parents weren't used to the telephone access," Miller said. "Now, they feel more comfortable about calling. I get more calls from parents, and I do more calling."

Teachers are in the habit of checking their voice mail before school and

during lunch and planning periods. They return calls while students are away from the classroom, unless it's an emergency. "Having the phone in your classroom gives you a private location to talk with parents, and you have all the student information with you," Miller said.

Dillingham said there are safeguards in place to curb abuse of the telephones. Teachers use access codes to make calls outside the school. "We've had very few incidents of abuse," Dillingham said. "However, we don't feel those few incidents are enough reason to deny access to calling out (on classroom phones) for other teachers."

The Dawson Springs teachers agree. "The administration has confidence in the staff that we're professionals," Miller said.

For more information about this district's compliance with the KETS standard for phones in classrooms, contact Kent Dillingham, district technology coordinator, at (270) 797-3811 or kdillingham@dsprings.k12.ky.us.



"You don't know what you've missed until you have a phone in your classroom. When I need to talk with a parent about a problem, I can just pick up the phone and deal with it right then. I feel very fortunate to have the phone in my classroom."

Lee Hall, primary teacher
Dawson Springs Elementary School

Paducah Middle launches separate classes for boys and girls in grades 6 and 7

One-semester experiment yielded promising results

By Dona Rains
Paducah Independent Schools

A one-semester experiment with separate classes for boys and girls got such positive results that educators at Paducah Middle School have decided to expand the concept to include all students in grades 6 and 7.

A pilot program that separated boys from girls in two 6th-grade classes resulted in improved grades, better behavior and “nothing but positive” reaction, said Cynthia Alston, the school’s principal. The program generated attention from educators throughout the state.

“If it worked so well for us,” said 6th-grade science teacher Teresa Grubbs, “other teachers were asking, ‘Why don’t we try it, too?’”

The school council at Paducah Middle agreed, after hearing recommendations from the faculty and parent curriculum and consolidating planning committees. When the school year starts in August, all of the school’s 6th- and 7th-graders will be in same-gender classes for all academic core subjects. Eighth-graders will remain in mixed classes to aid their transition to high school.

“We believe in the single-gender classes,” Alston said. “If we can get the 6th- and 7th-graders focused on believing they can achieve, they will be better prepared to succeed in high school.”

Last fall, when the 6th grade moved back to the middle school after being part of the elementary school for a decade, faculty noticed an increase in adolescent distractions.

“The note-passing and other ado-

lescent boy-girl distractions were so prevalent,” Alston said, “that we decided at mid-year we needed to do something to get the boys and girls away from each other so they could focus on their studies.”

The school divided the 6th-grade’s aptly named Pioneer team into a boys’ class and a girls’ class for the second semester. After just nine weeks, improvements were marked.



Paducah Middle separates the girls ...

Sixty-four percent of the boys had better grades in math and science. Girls showed even greater improvements: 94 percent improved in science, 78 percent improved in math.

Candy Varble, a social studies teacher, and Cathy Manning, a mathematics teacher, said behavior improved along with the grades.

“The girls have quit all of that note passing,” Varble said, “and the boys don’t have to act up to try to impress the girls.”

Manning said students seem kinder and more concerned about each other. “There’s just a difference in attitude,” Manning said. “They seem more focused and more willing to help each other.”

Grubbs said adolescents, especially girls, often are shy or intimidated in a mixed class. “They don’t want to be wrong,” she said. “They don’t want to be embarrassed.”

Students in the same-sex rooms show more confidence and are less afraid to ask for explanations when they don’t understand a concept, Manning added.

The students, who still see oppo-

site-sex classmates in classes such as band or art and during lunch, say they like the girls-only and boys-only classes for their core subjects.

“It was distracting to be in class



... from the boys, with positive results.

with a boy that, you know, you kind of liked,” said Melissa Knight with a shy smile.

Classmate Sashay Gillespie said her grades went from Cs to Bs. “I was distracted,” she said. “The boys always got us in trouble.”

Similarly, boys said they are better students without the distraction of girls. “I can concentrate and ask more questions,” said Logan Henry.

Brandbon Benberry agreed. “At first,” he said, “I thought it was a stupid idea, but now that I’m not caught up with the girls, I’ve seen a big difference in my grades.”

How big? “Humongous,” he said with a smile.

For more information, contact Principal Cynthia Alston at Paducah Middle School, (270) 444-5710, extension 0, or calston@paducah.k12.ky.us.

The writer of this story, Dona Rains, is director of information services for Paducah Public Schools and a past president of the Kentucky School Public Relations Association.

National Spotlight on Single-Sex Schooling

Now that new federal policies encourage single-sex education in public schools, some educators seek models as they consider dividing classes. Though studies on the subject exist, the results are mixed. Some, for example, show that girls do better in academics, athletics and social situations in all-girl programs and that their self-esteem improves. A 10-year study in Australia found that self-esteem in girls and boys who had been in single-sex classes initially declined when they started going to coed classes but then rose to new heights. There are only 11 public schools in the United States with schoolwide single-sex education – although many private schools offer the option. Results are mixed in some schools that have attempted it.

Source: Public Education Network “Newsblast,” May 17, 2002

For national perspectives on this topic, consider starting with these Web sites:

- www.ed.gov/PressReleases/05-2002/05082002.html
- www.edweek.org/ew/newstory.cfm?slug=04sommers.h21
- www.singlesexschools.org/
- www.csmonitor.com/2002/0508/p01s02-uspo.htm
- www.connectingwithkids.com/tipsheet/2002/64_mar20/samesex.html
- www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A11121-2002May13.html

IGP!

New documents help students plan for graduation and beyond

Kentucky's Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) academic and career planning folder is "new and improved" to better guide Kentucky students in grades 6-12 in identifying and achieving their education and career goals. New companion documents prepared by the Kentucky Department of Education explain the IGP process to educators, parents and students.

Completion of an IGP became a requirement for high school graduation in Kentucky in 2002. The IGP is first developed collaboratively by students, parents, teachers and counselors prior to high school. The plan is updated each year to help students make a successful transition to college, community or technical colleges, the work force or the military.

The new folder is a prototype, and school districts may use the folder or develop their own versions based on the components included in the IGP. Copies of the folder are available from the department on a cost-recovery basis. The cost is \$18.75 per packet of 25. An order form is available for download on the Web at www.kentuckyschools.org/osis/voced/IGP.asp.

These publications are also available online:

- Individual Graduation Plan — Charting My Future
- IGP parent brochure
- IGP manual

For more information, contact Donnalie Stratton at (502) 564-3775 or dstratto@kde.state.ky.us.



Save \$\$\$ on college loans!

Two new programs can result in major savings for Kentucky students and teachers who have borrowed money from the Kentucky Higher Education Student Loan Corporation (also known as The Student Loan People) to pay for college.

BestStart, available to students on Aug. 1, offers these benefits to college students:

- 1 percent origination fee (as much as 2 percent less than other lenders)
- 2 percent credit to the unpaid principal when a borrower completes the academic period for which the loan was made
- A 3.5 percent credit to the original principal for borrowers who make the first 30 consecutive payments on time

Best in Class offers those same benefits to teachers with new or existing Stafford Loans through the Student Loan People. In addition, teachers get these benefits:

- Interest forgiven for teachers completing an academic year at public and nonprofit Kentucky elementary or secondary schools. (Any interest paid is credited to the debt principal.)
- 20 percent of the loan's original principal forgiven each year for special education teachers at public and nonprofit Kentucky elementary or secondary schools.

Both programs offer a .25 percent discount for automatic payment withdrawals from the borrower's checking or savings account.

Joe L. McCormick, executive director of both the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority and The Student Loan People, said the programs remove financial barriers to college and technical training and reward responsible borrowers and dedicated teachers.

Additional loan incentives are available to medical, dental and osteopathic students and parents of undergraduate students. For more information about these incentives and the Best in Class and BestStart programs, call The Student Loan People at (502) 329-7186 or toll-free at (888) 678-4625, or visit the Web site at www.studentloanpeople.com.

New Web site explores court systems

The Kentucky Court of Justice has posted a new Web site (www.kycourts.net) that defines and explains Kentucky's court systems, from the Kentucky Supreme Court and Court of Appeals to district, circuit, family and drug courts. The site also outlines services provided by Kentucky's Administrative Office of the Courts.

The site provides information about the history of the courts, the state's four constitutions and other historically significant documents, plus these features:

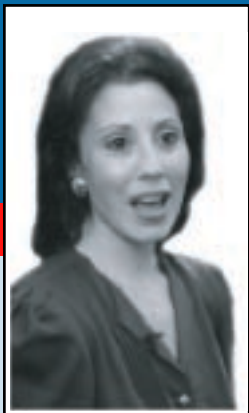
- Students can send questions and receive responses from the director of the Administrative Office of the Courts.
- Classrooms can compete in "best use of the Web site by a classroom"; high school juniors and seniors can submit original essays.
- Students can learn about court-related concepts through online games.
- An organization chart shows how courts are related to each other.
- Online, printable publications include brochures, pamphlets, newsletters and reports concerning the Court of Justice.

For more information about this resource, contact Kit Walden with the Administrative Office of the Courts at (502) 573-2350 or webmaster@kycourts.net, or visit www.kycourts.net. Use the various pull-down menus across the top to locate pages of specific interest to teachers and students. For best results, access this Web site using Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Welcome to 'Teacher's Lounge'

Kentucky Teacher launches this new feature with a cartoon by Mike Gray, an artist on the staff of the department's Division of Publications and Web Services. Our intent is to offer a lighter look at the important topic of education and the challenges teachers face.

What funny, touching or unusual things have happened in your classroom? Your anecdote could become a "Teacher's Lounge" cartoon or article. Please send your "Teacher's Lounge" submission to Fran Salyers by e-mail at fsalyers@kde.state.ky.us or by fax at (502) 564-6470.



Host
Pia Commings

Inside Kentucky Schools

A Kentucky Department of Education Production

**30 minutes of news and features
about education in Kentucky**

Second and fourth Saturday of every month

- noon Eastern/11 a.m. Central on KET
- 5:30 p.m. Eastern/4:30 p.m. Central on KET2

Please check TV listings for air times on local cable stations

For program information, visit
www.kentuckyschools.org/comm/mediasvcs/

'Family Day' is Sept. 23

Sept. 23 is Family Day—A Day to Eat Dinner With Your Children. Sponsored by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, the event promotes parental engagement as an effective way to reduce the risk of teen substance abuse.

Event coordinators report that a number of schools expanded on Family Day last year by hosting events, distributing information, and canceling homework and after-school activities to encourage family time. Some also incorporated Family Day into the curriculum.

For more information, visit www.casacolumbia.org on the Web or contact Sarah Winkeller at (212) 841-5215 or swinkell@casacolumbia.org.

KyEducators.org provides access to education training modules

A powerful training site is now available to Kentucky educators, anytime day or night. Now less than a month old, www.KyEducators.org will expand during the fall to provide instructional modules that help teachers and administrators study for state certification exams, develop professional plans and participate in online professional development in a variety of areas.

The Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB), in conjunction with the Council on Postsecondary Education and the Kentucky Virtual University, developed the site. Teachers, administrators, teacher educators and representatives from the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Education Association are consultants for continuing development of the site.

The Web site was designed to make quality information teachers and administrators need both accessible and affordable, said Phillip S. Rogers, director of Division of Testing and Research for the EPSB. Many of the modules will be available at no cost to participants.

The site is accessible to educators from their home or school computers. It offers free library service through the Kentucky Virtual Library, 24/7 technical support and a call center to answer non-technical questions.

KyEducators.org's first offering is a study guide for the Kentucky Principal Test. Candidates for principalships can access practice tests and register online for the test.

After piloting the principal test, site developers will add other instructional modules. Each module will include audio files of teachers' "stories," accounts of their own experiences concerning the topics addressed in the modules.

By Oct. 1, these modules will be online at www.KyEducators.org:

Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) Committee Training will offer comprehensive, interactive preparation for KTIP committee members who evaluate teacher interns. It eventually will replace the current "face-to-face" KTIP committee training.

Continuing Education Option (CEO): Program Overview is a free orientation module that will provide a comprehensive overview of the four-phase CEO program leading to Rank I or Rank II changes.

CEO: Building the Plan will provide nine successive online sessions educators can use to develop individualized comprehensive professional growth plans. This module will support teachers seeking rank change or certification renewals through the CEO. Regional cohort meetings will accompany this online module, which will be available upon EPSB approval only.

New-to-Kentucky Teachers will provide essential, Kentucky-specific information for teachers who are new to Kentucky. It will answer questions about Kentucky Core Content, the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System and other topics.

Including Exceptional Learners in General Education Classrooms will offer best-practice strategies to support teachers in meeting the needs of exceptional learners.

Transforming Classroom Management will contain effective strategies for creating and implementing successful relationships with P-12 students.

Orientation for Substitute Teachers will offer online preparation for substitute teachers, addressing classroom procedures, professionalism, behavior management and other key issues.

PRAXIS II Test Preparations will contain test-taking strategies plus sample questions on test content designed for teacher preparation programs (Part One) and individual students (Part Two).

Assessments, a secure online module, eventually will provide site-based access to tests such as the Kentucky Principal Test. Principalship candidates already have online access to a study guide and three practice tests.

Other modules will be posted at KyEducators.org as they are developed, Rogers said.

For more information, contact the Kentucky Virtual University call center toll free at (877) 740-4357 or visit www.KyEducators.org.

Into archaeology?

A new, student-designed, award-winning Internet site can guide your students through a study of the mounds and mound builders of northern Kentucky's tri-state region.

A team of six students and two coaches at Charles Russell Elementary in Ashland developed the site, chosen by ThinkQuest International as Kentucky's winner in a national Web page design competition. The students, all 6th-graders, chose and researched the topic, took virtual and actual field trips to various mound sites, interviewed an archaeologist, took photos and created graphics for the Web site.

See this ThinkQuest site, "A String of Beads...The Mound Builders of the Ohio Valley," at <http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212160/>.

For details about the project, contact library media specialist Sheila Gossett at sgossett@ashland.k12.ky.us or technology assistant Cynde Elkins at celkins@ashland.k12.ky.us. Both are on the KETS global list.

For more about ThinkQuest, go to www.thinkquest.org or contact Elaine Harrison of the Kentucky Department of Education at (502) 564-7168 or eharriso@kde.state.ky.us.

Write all about it!

Kentucky Teacher invites teachers to submit articles about their successes

Who can tell teachers more about teaching than a teacher? Kentucky Teacher welcomes teacher-written articles about successful approaches to any area of interest to teachers – instruction, classroom management, parent involvement, professional development, stress management and more.

To submit a story, follow these steps:

1. Contact us to make sure your topic fits with plans for future issues. We'll discuss possibilities and deadlines.

2. Draft your 500- to 800-word article. Focus on how you did what you did, the results you achieved, and how you know your strategy was successful. Include your name, address, phone number and e-mail address so readers can contact you for details if they need them.

3. Submit your draft by e-mail as a Word document (preferred) or by mail or fax.

We'll take it from there! We cannot publish all submissions, but we will consider each one. If we need to edit, we will give you an opportunity to review our suggested changes. We'll also talk with you about photo possibilities.

Want to know more about writing for this publication? Read the Kentucky Teacher submission guidelines available online at www.kentuckyschools.org/kentuckyteacher/submissions (or contact the editor for a copy by mail, fax or e-mail).

Ready to talk about your story idea? Contact the editor, Fran Salyers at (502) 564-3421 or fsalyers@kde.state.ky.us.

THE Bulletin Board

By Joy Barr
Kentucky Department of Education

Arts education resource available

The Arts Education Partnership has a new publication: "Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development." Visit www.aep-arts.org/ to download the publication and request additional information.



Music grants available for teachers

The National Music Foundation, through its American Music Education Initiative, offers competitive grants of \$1,000 and \$500 to all K-12 teachers who use American music in their lesson plans. Winning lesson plans from previous years are available at the foundation's Web site, www.usamusic.org. Application forms and guidelines are also posted there. The application deadline is Sept. 16.

KYSPRA promises 'magic' at 2002 fall conference

The theme of this year's Kentucky School Public Relations Association fall conference (Oct. 29 and 30, Hyatt Regency, Lexington) will be "The Magic of PR." The agenda includes sessions on dealing with public anger and working with FrontPage and PhotoShop, plus presentation of Outstanding Achievement in School Information Services (OASIS) awards, vendor exhibits and time for networking.

For a conference registration form, visit the KYSPRA Web site at www.kyspra.org. Details are available from KYSPRA secretary Linda Salyer at (270) 852-7000 or lsalyer@dcps.org.

Join 'Pledge Across America' on Oct. 11

President George W. Bush and U.S. Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige invite all of America's school children to join them at 2 p.m. EDT Oct. 11 in a coast-to-coast, synchronized recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. This annual event sets the stage for yearlong instruction on citizenship and American history.

For information and free teaching materials, visit www.celebrationusa.org.

Online resource connects school with careers

A Web site from the Bureau of Labor Statistics guides elementary students on career explorations based on their favorite school subjects. Careers are listed under the subjects of music and art, science, physical education and outdoors, social studies, mathematics and reading. Each career description includes details such as what the work entails, job availability, job preparation, average pay scale and professional associations to contact for more information.

Visit this online resource at http://stats.bls.gov/k12/html/edu_over.htm.

Teachers can encourage students to vote

Starting Sept. 11, students will have an opportunity to recruit voters while honoring America's armed forces. Freedom's Answer is a non-partisan program supported by education and youth groups and media organizations through the Youth Voter Corps in high schools. This is an opportunity for teachers to get young people involved in democracy and to teach civics in the classroom.

For more information, visit www.freedomsanswer.net.

School councils' conference to feature expert on closing achievement gaps

Kati Haycock, executive director of the Education Trust and a recognized expert on closing achievement gaps, will be the featured speaker at this year's Kentucky Association of School Councils conference, Oct. 24 and 25 at the Executive West in Louisville.

The conference agenda includes lessons from successful schools, information on research-based teaching strategies and how the brain learns, and strategies for responding to new legislation such as those concerning achievement gaps and college-level work in high schools. Both new and experienced council members can fulfill their training requirements at the conference.

Check the association's Web site (www.kasc.net) in late summer for the details and registration materials. Information is also available by phone at (859) 238-2188 or by e-mail at kasc@kasc.net.

Sept. 6-14 is American Character Week

Character Counts has proclaimed Sept. 6-14 "American Character Week." The national organization calls on schools to make the one-year anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11 a period of reflection and education focused on character and service. Online resources for teachers include ideas for school activities and community service projects, materials on service learning, essay prompts, quotations, materials on various public service options, and artwork for banners, posters and buttons.

Download the free materials at www.charactercounts.org.

Turn used ink cartridges into cash

Several organizations pay schools and student organizations for empty ink jet and laser printer cartridges, which they recycle. Schools can raise money for a variety of purposes by collecting cartridges in their schools and communities.

To learn more about this fund-raising possibility, search the Web for "recycling ink cartridges" sites. *Kentucky Teacher* found several in one search, including these:

- www.ptotoday.com/0801inkjet.html (article about this concept and how to begin)
- www.enn.com/marketplace/display-affiliate.asp?a=1550
- www.kashforkids.com
- www.greenschoolproject.com/schools.html
- www.recyclefirst.com

Kentucky Teacher shares this information but has not verified the services offered by these commercial sites.

Kentucky Teacher™

AUGUST 2002

Back Page/Front Burner

National Perspectives on Education

Testing the Testers

• Kentucky's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System ranked in the top 10 in The Princeton Review's first national ranking of state accountability systems. Criteria for evaluating each state's system included 25 indicators that measured system consistency, security, openness to public scrutiny and the flexibility it gives schools to meet state standards and improve over time.

For an executive summary of the findings plus links to the complete report, visit www.review.com/stateStudymsg.cfm on the Web.

School Culture

• "The question facing educational leaders is not 'Will our school have a culture?' but 'Will we make a conscious effort to shape our culture?' The culture of a school — the assumptions, habits, expectations, and beliefs of the school's staff — exists as clearly as the school building itself." So begins the article "Pull Out Negativity by Its Roots" by Rick DuFour and Becky Burnette, who identify four "weeds" in need of eradication and propose actions schools can take to get the weeding job done.

www.nsdc.org/library/jsd/burnette233.html

Professional Development

• Anything is possible when teachers have opportunities to work together! Read about eight characteristics of schools that have won the National Award for Model Professional Development.

www.wested.org/wested/pubs/online/PDawards/07context.shtml

• Download "Four Important Lessons About Teacher Professional Development," strategies for helping schools (especially middle schools) take a proactive approach to teacher professional development based on current skills and interests as well as an assessment of needs.

www.cprd.uiuc.edu/chest.asp#School%20Reform%20and%20Innovation

Grants

• Browse an archive of successful grant proposals to see examples of effective needs statements, goals and objectives, goal-related activities, and evaluation plans.

www.schoolgrants.org/proposal_samples.htm

Service Learning

• Want to start a volunteering or service learning program in your school? The site provides policies and procedures, definitions and articles, examples of successful programs integrated into the curriculum and other information.

www.idealists.org/kat/volunteercenter.html

NOTE: These Web addresses were active at press time.

Kentucky Department of Education

Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner

Visit the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site: www.kentuckyschools.org

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

New! 'Teacher's Lounge' page 13

Paducah Middle separates boys from girls page 11

KETS Status Report page 7

Breckinridge County is wired! page 8

Is there a phone in your classroom? page 10

Apply now to present at KILC 2003 page 5

KDE takes school support to a new level page 2

Study of Web-based assessment goes statewide page 1



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